

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

- 1-3. (Canceled).
4. (Currently Amended) A purified and isolated protein encoded by a the gene sequence of SEQ ID NO: 154.
5. (Currently Amended) A purified and isolated protein having ~~an~~ the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 206.
- 6-10. (Canceled).
11. (Currently Amended) A method of detecting antibodies against HCV, said method comprising:
- (a) contacting a biological sample with ~~at least one~~ the protein of claim 5 to form an immune complex with the antibodies; and
 - (b) detecting the presence of the immune complex.
12. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the biological sample is selected from the group consisting of serum, saliva or lymphocytes or other mononuclear cells.
13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 11, wherein the protein is bound to a solid support.
14. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the immune complex is detected using a labeled antibody.
15. (Currently Amended) A hepatitis C virus kit comprising: at least one protein comprising ~~an~~ the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 206.
16. (Currently Amended) A composition comprising ~~at least one~~ the protein of claim 5 and an excipient, diluent or carrier.
- 17-18. (Canceled).
19. (Currently Amended) An immunogenic composition for inducing an immune response in a mammal against hepatitis C virus, comprising ~~at least one~~ the protein according to claim 5 in a pharmacologically acceptable carrier.
- 20-31. (Canceled)

32. (Currently Amended) An isolated genotype-specific peptide ~~having~~ comprising an amino acid sequence of at least 8 amino acids deduced from genotype-specific amino acid domains located in SEQ ID NO: 206, wherein genotype-specific is defined as belonging to a the single genotype 6a (type 6) of HCV with reference to Figure 7J.

33. (Original) A method of detecting antibodies specific for a single genotype of HCV, said method comprising:

- (a) contacting a biological sample with at least one peptide of claim 32 to form an immune complex with the antibodies, and
- (b) detecting the presence of the immune complex.

34. (Original) The method of claim 33, wherein the biological sample is selected from the group consisting of serum, saliva or lymphocytes or other mononuclear cells.

35. (Original) The method of claim 33, wherein said peptide is bound to a solid support.

36. (Original) The method of claim 33, wherein the immune complex is detected using a labelled antibody or antigen.

37. (Previously Presented) A kit for use in detecting antibodies specific for a single genotype of HCV, said kit comprising: at least one genotype-specific peptide of claim 32.

38. (Currently Amended) An isolated universally conserved peptide ~~having~~ consisting of an amino acid sequence of at least 8 amino acids deduced from universally conserved amino acid domains found in SEQ ID NO: 206, wherein universally conserved is defined as belonging to all genotypes of HCV with reference to Figure 7J.

39. (Original) A method of detecting antibodies against all genotypes of HCV, said method comprising:

- (a) contacting a biological sample with at least one peptide of claim 38 to form an immune complex with the antibodies, and
- (b) detecting the presence of the immune complex.

40. (Original) The method of claim 39, wherein the biological sample is selected from the group consisting of serum, saliva or lymphocytes or other mononuclear cells.

41. (Original) The method of claim 39, wherein said peptide is bound to a solid support.

Appl. No. : **09/084,691**
Filed : **May 26, 1998**

42. (Original) The method of claim 39, wherein the immune complex is detected using a labelled antibody or antigen.

43. (Original) A composition comprising at least one peptide of claim 32 and an excipient, diluent or carrier.

44. (Original) A composition comprising at least one peptide of claim 38 and an excipient, diluent or carrier.

45. (Canceled).

46. (Previously Presented) An immunogenic composition for inducing an immune response in a mammal against hepatitis C virus, comprising at least one peptide according to claims 32 or 38 in a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

47-59. (Canceled).